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HR



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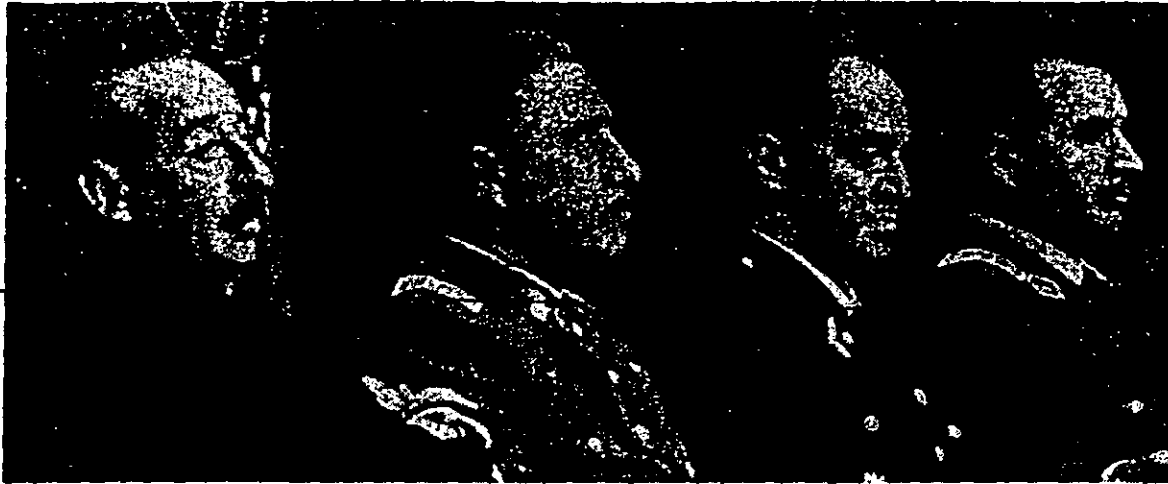
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October 17, 1975

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The Junta
Admiral Merino President Pinochet General Leigh General Mendoza

CHILE: CHANGING ADVISERS

President Pinochet's dismissal of four ultraconservative civilian advisers seems likely to soften some of the hard-line policies that have been so damaging to the government's image-building attempts.

The advisers' ouster evidently was calculated to check fighting within the regime and to respond to army complaints about the dictatorial, right-wing influences created by their presence. Another important motivation undoubtedly was to foster some measure of international respectability by eliminating the most vocal exponents of the government's right-wing philosophy.

Less conservative elements within the military and some members of the junta have resented this small rightist clique and have blamed its members for the poor advice given to Pinochet on domestic and foreign affairs. Even conservative politicians who strongly support the government have voiced reservations about the "unhealthy" influence of these advisers, whom one prominent National Party leader described as "semi-fascist."

The outspoken air force member of the junta, General Leigh, frequently has been contemptuous of decisions made at the behest of Pinochet's civilian team. On several occasions these objections, [REDACTED] caused the President to change his mind and steer away from the more extreme positions advocated by the ultraconservatives. 150

One of the dismissed advisers [REDACTED] had persuaded Pinochet in July to cancel the visit of a UN human rights investigating team—an action that angered Leigh and other government officials and caused widespread denunciation of Chile abroad. The Human Rights Commission released an extremely harsh report in the UN this week that is certain to stir renewed attacks on the military regime.

Another of Pinochet's former advisers is said to have been instrumental in devising and planning cover stories concerning 119 Chileans allegedly killed or missing outside the country. Strong evidence that the 119 were killed while under detention in Chile has evoked sharp condemnation in the foreign press. Official claims that

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they were exiles operating from Argentina have not been substantiated, and the government's credibility has grown so thin that the whole incident is now a source of acute embarrassment.

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Pinochet [REDACTED] intends to replace the dismissed civilians with a new committee for political matters composed of five high-level army officers. While no dramatic shifts in policy are likely, the move could be an indication that Pinochet finally realizes that a gradual relaxation is long overdue if Chile is to improve its international image. The fact that the committee is to be staffed only by army officers, however, is certain to be misunderstood abroad and may irritate sensibilities within the junta, particularly those of outspoken air force chief General Leigh.

In another shift involving a civilian adviser, Pinochet demanded and received the resignation of respected economist Fernando Leniz, vice president of the Chilean Copper Corporation and a former economy minister. He was dismissed apparently because Pinochet and some senior army officers opposed his policies. His replacement by a general believed to be close to Pinochet will give the military closer control over the planned reorganization of the copper corporation. Meanwhile, there are strong indications that another high-level member of the civilian economic team may be leaving the government soon. [REDACTED]

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